

Executive Update

By Michelle Casavant, ALF Co-Chair

I'm thrilled to be one of the incoming Co-Chairs of the Aboriginal Lawyers Forum ("ALF"). Christina J. Cook and I are so excited for the upcoming year. The Executive have a few new initiatives to introduce in addition to the annual ALF Holiday Banquet on November 24, 2023 and ALF Annual Retreat in Whistler, May 24-26, 2024.

Randy Robinson, now Past Chair, had a busy two years as he led ALF through the end of the pandemic, along with those on last year's ALF Executive: Christina J. Cook, Isabel Jackson, Martin Buehler, Breanne Martin, Shawnee Monchalín, Angeline Nyce, Geordie Hungerford, Sheila Simpson, Charlotte Rose, and Laura Beaudry. I am super grateful for the work of the volunteers last year.



This year's executive has 11 members, and student representatives from UVic, UBC and TRU. This year's executive are all returning from last year, with Geordie as the only departure from the board. Without these volunteers it would be impossible to continue to support the Indigenous legal community.

Since its inception, ALF has continued to grow and have a deeper and more meaningful presence in CBABC and the broader legal community. ALF has a seat on the CBABC Board of Directors, as well as the following committees and groups: Policy & Advocacy, Access to Justice, Equity Diversity & Inclusion, BarTalk Editorial, Truth & Reconciliation, Law Society (Bencher) Meetings, and Provincial Council.

This year will prove to be another busy year for the ALF Executive and membership. I will be hosting monthly beading lunches for Indigenous lawyers. Over the pandemic, I've hosted a number of "Learn to Bead" sessions (including at the ALF Retreat in June 2023) and continued those with monthly virtual beading lunches for Indigenous employees at my workplace. It has created a greater sense of support, community and belonging. Naturally, I thought to extend this to the larger Indigenous legal community. The monthly beading lunches will be open to all Indigenous lawyers, law and articling students, and judges. The next session is Friday, November 17 - [register here!](#)

Continued on the following page

Forum Drum Editors

Christina J. Cook, Charlotte Rose, Shawnee Monchalín

In This Issue

Executive Update

Indigenous Author Spotlight:
Michelle Good

LSBC Bencher Update

British Columbia Human
Rights Tribunal Update

ALF Retreat June 2023

BCCLA Launches Improved
Resource for People
Disproportionately
Targeted by Police

The Birth of Gwizhii Institute

TRU ILSA Update

UBC's Peter A. Allard School
ILSA Update

Level Justice

R v Powley and the Rise of
"Métis Denialism"

Assistant Professor
Andrea Hilland on the
foundational role of education
in reconciliation

Randy's Reflections

Native Courtworkers
Celebrate 50 Years

Congratulations on the Opening
of the Lillooet Indigenous Court!

UVIC ILSA Update

Remembering When: Indigenous
Law Students of the Past

ALF's 16th Annual National
Indigenous Peoples Day
Online Auction

National Indigenous Justice
Strategy - HAVE YOUR SAY!

ABORIGINAL LAWYERS FORUM



CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
British Columbia

Continued from the previous page

Lots of other events are happening this year. You can view details and register at cbabc.org/events.

- ALF and SAGDA meeting with speaker Justice Harry Laforme
- ALF and UBC ILSA speed mentoring night at Fasken
- ALF and DOJ online auction fundraising for the Warrior Project
- ALF Holiday Banquet at the Fairmont Waterfront
- ALF Annual Retreat in Whistler at the Squamish Cultural Centre
- ALF – Vancouver Island event

Last year, the funds raised by the silent auctions for the Warrior Project supported the only Indigenous articling student in the Everyone Legal Clinic cohort. We continue to raise money for the Warrior Project and provide support for Indigenous articling students.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our events this year!

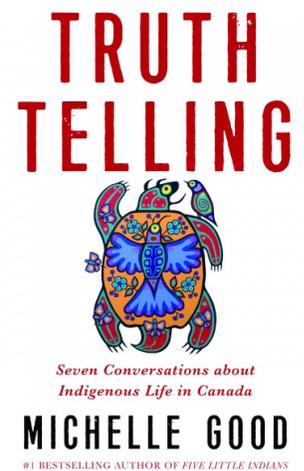
Indigenous Author Spotlight: Michelle Good

By Shawnee Monchalin

Truth Telling: Seven Conversations about Indigenous Life in Canada

MICHELLE GOOD is a writer of Cree ancestry and a member of the Red Pheasant Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. After three decades of working with Indigenous communities and organizations, she obtained her law degree. She earned her MFA in creative writing at UBC while still practising law. Her novel, *Five Little Indians*, was nominated for the Writers' Trust Award for Fiction and the Scotiabank Giller Prize. It received the HarperCollins/UBC Prize for Best New Fiction, the Amazon First Novel Award, the Kobo Emerging Writer Prize and the Governor General's Award for Fiction. *Five Little Indians* was also chosen for Canada Reads 2022. Michelle Good's poems, short stories and essays have been published in magazines and anthologies across Canada.

Truth Telling: Seven Conversations about Indigenous Life in Canada is a collection of essays about the contemporary Indigenous experience in Canada. From resistance and reconciliation to the resurgence and reclamation of Indigenous power, Michelle Good explores the issues through a series of personal essays.



Did you know?

Debra Mearns was the first Indigenous woman to be called to the bar in B.C. in 1981! Mearns attended law school in 1976, graduated in 1980 and was called to the Bar in 1981. Mearns went on to work in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver advocating for the residents in the area.

Lantern Films is currently producing a documentary on Mearns' incredible career called "*Deb Mearns: Still Here*".

LSBC Bencher Update

By Christina J Cook

I am so honoured to have been elected as an LSBC Bencher in the July by-election. Representation matters and I am so pleased to add my voice to the Bencher table. I have only been a Bencher for a few short months and I am up for re-election in November 2023, at which time I would be grateful for your vote and support.

In my short time as a Bencher so far, I can advise that the biggest topic for consideration is the Provincial Government's regulation change to the Single Legal Regulator. As you know, the Province announced in 2022 that it would be completely changing legal regulation in B.C. by creating a new regulator that would govern lawyers, notaries and paralegals. In September 2022, the Province issued an [Intentions Paper](#) setting out their goals for the changes and invited feedback from the public and legal community.

In May 2023, the Province issued a [What We Heard Report: Legal Professions Regulatory Modernization](#). The report noted that there was widespread support for Indigenous participation within the governance of the new regulator to ensure that Indigenous voices and perspectives are fully incorporated.

The Province proposed to table legislation in the fall of 2023. However, on September 22, 2023, the Law Society received a letter from the Province advising that further consultation was needed and they intended to table the legislation in the Spring of 2024.

Another big event that occurred in July 2023 was when the Law Society of BC Benchers unanimously approved the [Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory Matters Report](#). This report was created by the Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory Matters Task Force to identify systemic barriers experienced by Indigenous complainants and witnesses and propose solutions to establish and maintain culturally safe and trauma-informed regulatory processes.

This task force was created in response to the scathing dissent written by Karen Snowshoe, K.C. in the [Bronstein decision](#).

The report addresses the Law Society's need and desire to reconcile its processes with Indigenous legal principles. The recommendations include taking steps to build relationships, gain trust and become more proactive in preventing harm to Indigenous persons and communities and, more generally, the public.

In addition to these activities, as a Bencher I have been conducting articling student interviews, attending committee meetings (I have been assigned to the Credentials Committee, Complaints Review Committee and the Legal Ethics Committee). All the Benchers have been very welcoming, especially the Indigenous benchers. Katrina Harry, Brian Dybwad, and Lindsay Leblanc and I even had a chance to snap a photo together.

I hope to continue with this volunteering as Indigenous voices and perspectives are SO important to be included in the regulation of our profession. As Indigenous people continue to be over-represented in the criminal justice system, our children are over-represented in the child protection system.

As our Indigenous law students continue to encounter challenges finding articles and as our communities continue to require extensive and costly legal services in many areas from specific claims to economic development, I am so passionate about ensuring the Indigenous voices are included in the legal regulation in the protection of the public.



British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal Update

Expanding Our Vision: Cultural Equality & Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights

By Shawnee Monchalin

Expanding Our Vision Committee

On January 15, 2020, the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal released a report addressing serious access to justice concerns for Indigenous Peoples bringing human rights complaints to the Tribunal. The report, entitled *Expanding Our Vision: Cultural Equality & Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights*, makes far-reaching recommendations that could transform human rights in this province. The Human Rights Tribunal is being joined by Indigenous, legal and human rights organizations in a shared commitment to transform human rights for Indigenous Peoples in the province.

The Tribunal has been supported in its work to implement the EOV report by its Expanding Our Vision Committee. The Tribunal is grateful to Committee members who have so generously given of their time and acknowledges their work, expertise, and contributions.

EOV Implementation Progress Over Fiscal 2022/23

With the support of the EOV Committee, the Tribunal continues to make progress in implementing the recommendations in the EOV report. It remains committed to improving its services for Indigenous peoples.

During this time, the Tribunal continued to face significant challenges in this task given that the number of complaints received has tripled. In January 2023, the Province increased the Tribunal's funding. The additional funding has helped the Tribunal to address its overall backlog and support their work to implement the EOV Report recommendations.

Indigenous Navigators

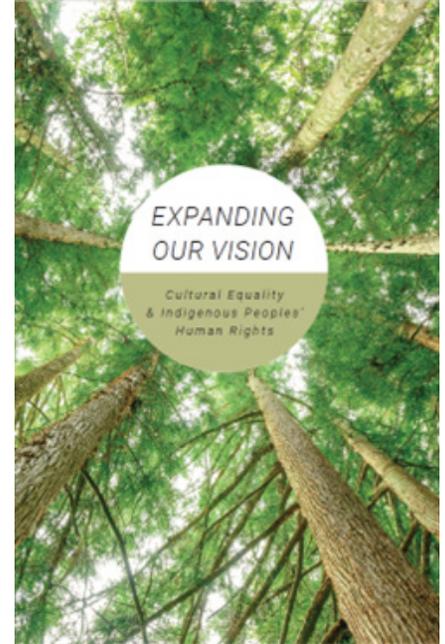
Increased funding from the Province has allowed the Tribunal to implement EOV Report Recommendation 9.2 to "create the position of Indigenous ... Navigators to help guide, support, and coach Indigenous Peoples through the BCHRT process, and to help them address administrative barriers". Over this fiscal year, the Tribunal continued to develop the Indigenous Navigator position and, with provincial funding, hired four Indigenous Navigators on March 27, 2023. In the next fiscal year, the Indigenous Navigators will have a key role to help the Tribunal meet the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples navigating the Tribunal's process. See bchrt.bc.ca.

Development of Indigenous Case Stream

Recommendation 9 in the EOV Report is that the Tribunal "create an Indigenous specific stream within the BCHRT". The EOV Committee has continued to inform the Tribunal's work on recommendation 9, including identifying general guiding principles, and more specific advice on ongoing internal training, the Indigenous navigator positions, modification of forms, public information, and the creation of an Indigenous stream from intake to the resolution of a complaint.

Screening of Complaints filed by an Indigenous Complainant

In March 2021, following the recommendation of the EOV Committee, the Tribunal initiated a dedicated screening process for complaints filed by people who self-identify as Indigenous. That process has been implemented throughout the 2022/23 fiscal period. In the Tribunal's regular screening process, the Registrar reviews each complaint to determine if the complaint sets out discrimination under the Code or could be about discrimination but needs more information.



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If the complaint does not set out discrimination under the Code, the case is referred to a case manager to draft a letter to the complainant either explaining why the complaint cannot proceed or seeking more information. The Tribunal takes a different approach to complaints that have been filed by Indigenous people. This different approach is in response to the EOJ Report finding that the screening process presents barriers to Indigenous complaints proceeding and being heard on their merits. These barriers serve to discourage Indigenous people from filing or continuing complaints at the Tribunal.

When a complaint is filed by a self-identified Indigenous person, a case manager specifically trained and dedicated to Indigenous complaints is assigned. First, that case manager reaches out to the complainant to: offer information about the process, answer any questions, and provide referrals if needed. If the case manager identifies a concern about whether the complaint contains sufficient information to proceed, the complaint is referred to an Indigenous Tribunal member for guidance.

Sometimes the Tribunal needs more information before a complaint can proceed. If this is the case, the case manager or Tribunal member will write to the complainant, explain the concern, and provide an opportunity to provide more information. Further information often leads to the Tribunal accepting some or all of their complaint. The Tribunal reviewed this process, in consultation with the EOJ Committee, in December 2022. That review concluded that the process was having a positive impact on improving access to the Tribunal, and that it should continue. In the new fiscal year, the Indigenous Navigators will play a key role in the Tribunal's process for screening Indigenous complaints, per EOJ Report recommendation 9.2.

Training to Develop Cultural Competency and Safety

The Tribunal continued its ongoing learning to “reduce and eliminate procedural barriers that Indigenous Peoples face in accessing BCHRT services”: Recommendation 9.1. Staff and members reflected on their training through the province's House of Indigenous Learning, and then enrolled in and completed the “4 Seasons of Reconciliation” course through the First Nations University of Canada. Staff and members were able to attend a trauma-informed training workshop delivered by Karen Snowshoe, KC., Gwizhii Institute of Learning. All staff and members met monthly in small groups to learn about topics including UNDRIP and the Declaration, MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA people, Indigenous Peoples Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous identity, and Indigenous human rights cases. In March 2023, members and legal counsel began a 3-part webinar, “Indigenous Legal Systems and Administrative Tribunals” through the Canadian Council of Administrative Tribunals.

Analyzing Indigenous Complaints Dismissed under s. 27 of the Code

The EOJ Report recommended that the Tribunal undertake an analysis of complaints that are “weeded out” of the system: Recommendation 13.1. To implement that recommendation, the Tribunal initiated that process resulting in a June 2021 report by Professor Bethany Hastie of the University of British Columbia, titled “Examining the BC Human Rights Tribunal's Gatekeeping Function: An Analysis of s. 27 Decisions of Human Rights Complaints Brought by Indigenous Complainants,” and presented her findings and recommendations to the Tribunal. The Tribunal shared and discussed these findings with the EOJ Committee at the start of the new fiscal year. The Tribunal continues to consult with the EOJ Committee on the application to dismiss process.

Indigenous Parties in Mediation

Indigenous parties may request an Indigenous mediator, Indigenous protocols, and Indigenous dispute resolution models. The Tribunal continued working to improve its capacity and service delivery in these areas, in consultation with the EOJ Committee, and Indigenous mediators.

Referrals to the BC Human Rights Clinic, and Other Resources

The Tribunal includes Human Rights Clinic [HRC] advocacy resource information in its Indigenous contact emails and telephone calls. In some cases, the Tribunal will reach out to the HRC to make direct referrals where complainants would benefit from the HRC's assistance. The Tribunal also provides other specialized referrals, based on its [updated list of other available resources across the province](#), and consultation with the EOJ Committee.

ALF Retreat June 2023

Honouring the Past, Foundations for the Future at Tigh Na Mara resort in Parksville

By Michelle Casavant

In June 2023, I was lucky enough to attend the ALF Retreat not as an organizer, but as an ALF member. I took a year away from the ALF Executive, to focus on my new additional role as an Instructor at Capilano University in the School of Legal Studies.

The 2023 ALF Retreat was exceptional. The retreat was hosted on the traditional and unceded lands of the Qualicum First Nation, Komoks First Nation, and the Snaw-naw-as First Nation in what is now known as Parksville. The Tigh Na Mara resort is ocean front on the ever-spanning Rath Trevor Beach. My daughter and I spent a lot of time wandering the beach as the tide was out, searching in tide pools, building canals and sandcastles, and walking hand in hand.

We were welcomed to the territory by Carrie Reid of Qualicum First Nation. The faculty was stellar, again, with Dr. Bruce McIvor, Dr. Sarah Morales, Dr. Judith Sayers, The Hon. Judge Karen Whonnock, Law Society Bencher Brian Dybwad and artist Jocelyne Robinson. This is Indigenous excellence. Indigenous people are thriving and having an effect on changing our legal systems.

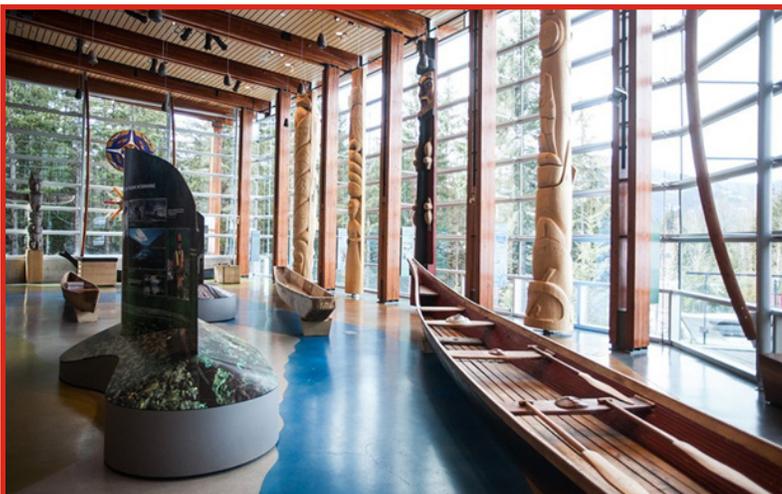
One of the sessions was a break from the talking head to engage our soul in some cultural activity. I led a Métis beading session. Each attendee received a beading kit to bead an orange shirt pin. My daughter assisted me at the front with the instructions and guidance throughout the session. You could hear a pin drop in the room – there was the utmost focus and concentration on beading. Many people gained a new appreciation for bead work after this hour-long session.

Again this year, the registration was offset by the generous donations of many sponsors, including Drew Lafond, First Peoples Law, Charest Legal Solutions, the Law Society, the FNFMB, and many others. Thanks to the organizers for their work on soliciting these sponsors.

This year, our retreat will be in Whistler and I can guarantee, it will not disappoint. See you there?



Indigenous Lawyer Carolyn Belleau showing the beaded pin she made at the Retreat



SAVE THE DATE

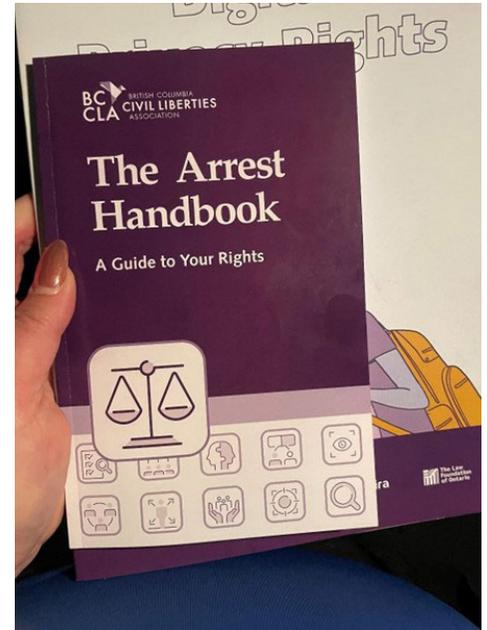
**ALF Retreat
May 24 – 26, 2024
Whistler, BC**

BCCLA Launches Improved Resource for People Disproportionately Targeted by Police

By Veronica Martisius (Mohawk, Six Nations of the Grand River and Staff Counsel at the BCCLA)

It's no secret that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately targeted by police. Policing as an institution was established to enforce colonial laws and occupation. Police encounters remain inherently dangerous and put Indigenous lives at risk. They can also result in Indigenous peoples becoming subject to settler-colonial systems that often cause more harm than good. What is less evident or talked about are the methods by which we can defend ourselves and/or our relations in the face of unjust treatment by the state and its actors.

To address this gap, the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) recently published an expanded update of its most widely used publication, The Arrest Handbook. The Handbook is a centralized and comprehensive guide to our rights as they pertain to interactions with the police and in situations that are policed. The update reflects major changes to the legal landscape including new information on heavily policed communities, mental health and involuntary treatment, trans and gender diverse rights, and Indigenous resistance. With respect to the latter, the BCCLA thought it was critically important to clearly distinguish Indigenous resistance (e.g., land and water defence) from protest as expressions of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination that are guided by Indigenous peoples' inherent rights and responsibilities.



The Handbook was created to empower individuals and communities most at risk of infringements on their civil liberties and human rights by police or other law enforcement agencies. Although it might feel counter-intuitive for Indigenous peoples to invoke certain rights that flow from Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms alongside their own, Charter rights are tools that can and should be used to hold settler governments and police accountable to the laws they must follow or should have followed. After all, that's what they call the rule of law.

In addition to information about your rights, the Handbook includes a directory of crisis support lines and organizations to call for legal support if you believe your rights have been violated. The BCCLA also created The Arrest Pocketbook, a condensed 24-page version of the Handbook with a QR code to the full-length version, allowing for easy, on-the-go access.

The Handbook and Pocketbook are available to [download for free](#). If your firm, organization or community group would like hardcopies of the Handbook, you can fill out the online form via website link or email the BCCLA at info@bccla.org.



Did you know?

Bill Wilson of Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation was the second First Nations person to graduate law school in B.C. in 1973! Wilson was a strong political leader for Indigenous people in B.C. and across Canada.

Wilson is featured in the National Film Board's film "[Dancing Around the Table](#)" which chronicles the role Indigenous people played in shaping the Canadian Constitution, highlighting the 1984 Federal Provincial Conference of First Ministers on Aboriginal Constitutional Matters!

The Birth of Gwizhii Institute

By Karen Snowshoe K.C.

Gwizhii means wisdom in my language (Teetlit-Gwich'in). In my culture, wisdom is not a one-way transmission of knowledge from teacher to student; rather it is a collective experience of sharing knowledge, wisdom and understanding. I am the founder of Gwizhii Institute, dedicating my life work as an educator to my Jijuu (grandmother) Louisa Snowshoe. Louisa was born in 1912 in the Blackstone Flats in the Yukon Territory. Louise was raised in a nomadic society traveling vast distances to harvest traditional food sources (caribou, moose, muskrat, beaver, ducks, fish, berries, etc.). When Louise was a young child, her family traveled by foot and dog-team to join the northern Gwich'in community of Teetlit-Zheh (Fort McPherson/people of the headwaters). The traditional route that they traveled become the Dempster highway in 1975.

In Teetlit-Zheh, young Louise was happy to join a larger community of Gwich'in people. This sense of community was quickly disrupted, however, as Louise and her peers were removed from their families and community, and relocated to Hay River Indian Residential School. The children traveled a long journey of 4-5 days by boat. It wasn't until Louise was 15 that she returned to her home community.

And following with tradition, Louise was arranged to be married. Her young husband was William Snowshoe. Young Louise and William went on to have five children. When it was time for their eldest child (Abraham) to move to residential school, the young family was glad that there was now a newly built residential school in Aklavik, which only required a 4-5 hour boat ride. Being closer did not, however, save the young Abraham from harm. He died at residential school in Aklavik at the age of seven – no reason or body was provided.



Karen Snowshoe, KC with parka and moccasins that my Jijuu Louisa made for me

In shock and grief, Louise and William took their remaining four children and went into hiding out “on the land”. The young family only returned to Teetlit-Zheh during the summers when all the community’s children would return home for the summer from Aklavik.

Every August, when the community’s children returned to residential school in Aklavik, the young Snowshoe family would return to their life out on the land. William and Louise’s only girl Martha recalled well into her Elder years the grief that she experienced each August as all her friends left the community, and she returned out onto the land with her family. It was only in her 70’s that Martha shared about the grief and confusion she felt as a child each August, not knowing where all the children had gone. Until Martha’s passing in 2022, every August would mark a time of grief as she was reminded of the community’s children annual disappearance.

When a day school (Fleming Hall) was built in Teetlit-Zheh, the Snowshoe family returned to their home community. There, they could live knowing that their children were only required to attend day school and could return home to their family each evening. Because Martha and her siblings were raised on the land, she had a strong grasp of her Gwich'in language, culture and traditional survival skills. Martha was 11 years old when she and her three brothers started attending Fleming Hall day school. Here, the siblings would learn English and gain a western-type education. Martha also

recalled that many children were also experiencing abuses similar those who lived at residential schools. The only saving grace for Martha and her siblings is that they would return to the safety of Louise and William at the end of each school day. Many survivors of abuse at Fleming Hall recall that the only place they felt safe was in the small sewing room occupied by Louise Snowshoe (she worked as a seamstress at the school).

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Fast forward to 1968. Martha is pregnant, in her 20s, lands in Vancouver with her boyfriend, a young white man from southern Canada, who she had met in Inuvik. With promises of a better future, Martha is now in the big city, alone, ESL, little formal education, away from her community and cultures, and ready to give birth. On a sunny afternoon in September, Martha gives birth to a baby girl. Unsure of how she is going to care for this baby, Martha is easy prey for hospital social workers who convince Martha that her baby is better off being adopted. Martha's baby girl was part of the 60s Scoop. Martha battled to get her baby girl back as she also battled surviving in the big city with little resources or support. Martha found solace in the Indian bars in the DTES with other Indigenous peoples who were also displaced from their traditional territories, trying to survive in a racist climate with few resources or support.

Martha's baby girl was eventually named Karen. I am Karen. I was a 60s scoop survivor having been in and out of foster care from 5 days old to 5 years old. I am also a survivor of generational trauma and direct trauma. As a young child, I experienced abuse in foster care to such an extent that one of my foster homes was shut down permanently. My birth records describe me as a "Treaty 11 Native Indian/Caucasian" baby girl. I experienced racism from birth. By the time I was five, I had witnessed an attempted killing in a DTES housing project as well as life on the run, as her mother tried to leave an abusive relationship. A four year old I learned to live in hiding and that being "seen" could equal death. When my mother's ex-boyfriend finally caught up with us, a neighbour intervened to save Martha and me. The neighbour ended up dead. Martha and I would both go on to be diagnosed with severe PTSD and agoraphobia. Martha eventually got sober and returned to her homeland to focus on healing and giving back, teaching her language and culture, and raising her grand-children.



Jijuu Louisa on the left



Karen's mother (on the right) at her fish camp on the Peel River

I would go on to law school and to develop a career in human rights and Indigenous rights. As a young lawyer, I worked and lived in Canada's north (Inuvik, Yellowknife, Whitehorse) for 14 years. During that time, I raised countless Indigenous foster children. I also used her own direct experience with trauma and generational trauma to support others who were required to testify about their experienced in legal settlements. As an adjudicator with the Independent Assessment Process, I helped to resolve almost 34,000 claims of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse sustained by residential school survivors. I was a pioneer in trauma-informed practice. I put into practice what her Jijuu (grandmother) Louisa had taught me from a young age – creating space where those who've experienced trauma feel safety, dignity and a sense of belonging. I was senior counsel with the MMIWG2S Inquiry. I developed an innovative dispute resolution practice based on the decolonial approach introduced by my Jijuu Louisa. In 2018, I was the first Indigenous person to be elected as a B.C. Law Society Bencher. I have been a trailblazer in providing trauma-informed and culturally sensitive mediations and adjudications across Canada, often incorporating Indigenous legal orders and traditions.

In 2022, I founded Gwizhii Institute of Learning specializes in Trauma-Informed Practice, Dispute Resolution Processes and Indigenous Reconciliation. I work collaboratively with clients to tailor-make workshops, training, policy, and internal dispute resolution mechanisms. In 2023, I received

the King's Counsel designation for exceptional contributions to the practice of law. My diagnoses of PTSD and agoraphobia have been in remission since 2004. Each day, I strive to leave a legacy inspired by my Jijuu Louisa, my Gwich'in family and community.

For more information about the Gwizhii Institute of Learning, checkout their webpage at: gwizhii.com.

Thompson Rivers University ILSA Update

By TRU ILSA Tara-Lynn Wilson (First Nation President)

Bailie Copeland (Métis President) & Reanna Thorne (Ally Representative)

The Indigenous Law Students Association at Thompson Rivers University Law (“TRU-ILSA”) is located on the unceded, traditional lands of the Tk’emlúps te Secwepemc of the Secwepemcúlcw. TRU-ILSA is a student-led club composed of a four-member executive. Tara-Lynn Wilson (First Nation President), Bailie Copeland (Métis President), and Reanna Thorne (Ally Representative).

TRU-ILSA decided to create a new position within their executive committee this year that will open the club to more diverse members. The ILSA Ally Representative position was created to show that ILSA is open and accepting of all law students who find Indigenous legal issues important.

TRU-ILSA also restructured their executive committee to have better, and more directed representation of Indigenous law students. The positions of the First Nation President, Métis President and Inuit President were created so each group of Indigenous peoples are properly represented, and each of their cultures and traditions are respected at TRU law. TRU-ILSA hopes that this form of inclusion will encourage all future Indigenous students to consider TRU law as a viable choice. The position of Inuit President is currently vacant, and TRU-ILSA hopes to gain more Inuit law students who can fill the position and represent their culture at TRU law.

TRU-ILSA receives immense support from the TRU Law administration, TRU Law faculty, and surrounding law firms and associations for the initiatives and activities brought forth by the chapter. TRU-ILSA is extremely grateful for the assistance and support it receives. TRU-ILSA engages with the Faculty of Law, the greater TRU community and Tk’emlúps te Secwepemc to promote diversity, equity, and an Indigenous perspective within the law by creating and supporting events for its members and the public.

The TRU-ILSA executive committee makes every effort to create a welcoming environment for all incoming and current students of TRU Law. TRU-ILSA promotes and encourages the learning of Indigenous culture and how it interacts with the legal community. Every year, TRU-ILSA collaborates with groups and clubs to host various events on campus and in the community to promote Aboriginal culture, awareness, and legal education. This year TRU-ILSA have currently hosted the showing of the documentary film, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* by Alanis Obomsawin, and amongst many future events, TRU-ILSA will be co-hosting an invited senior lawyer to talk about their work with Indigenous international trade. With these, and future events, TRU-ILSA hopes to broaden the education of our peers to include the awareness of the atrocities the Indigenous population had to face in the past, and to show that Indigenous people still face issues in the legal system to this day.

TRU-ILSA also collaborates with Cplul’kwe’ten (the “Gathering Place”), the Indigenous student centre on campus, by providing a peer mentor to be available weekly and assisting in any activities. TRU-ILSA also offers members to speak to Indigenous high school students on, and off-campus who aspire to attend law school someday. TRU-ILSA also provides tutoring to Indigenous students who are preparing to write the LSAT exam. All members are firmly committed to repaying and giving back the support their members have received.

In the Fall of 2023, TRU-ILSA plans on attending the Indigenous Bar Association Annual Conference. TRU-ILSA, along with the assistance of TRU law and supporting law firms, hope to broaden the education of the TRU-ILSA members in the area of Indigenous/Aboriginal law.



*Tara-Lynn Wilson
(First Nation President)*



*Bailie Copeland
(Métis President)*



*Reanna Thorne
(Ally Representative)*

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TRU Law has committed to its mandate to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #28, which teaches law students about Aboriginal people and the law. There are a myriad of elective courses relating to Indigenous issues and the law, as well as an Indigenous specific moot offered to students. Additionally, it has been being resolutely implemented into the curriculum this year, with 2L students being required to take the course "Truth and Rebuilding Canadian Indigenous Legal Relations." The course focuses on the substantive elements of the law-school-specific TRC Call to Action #28, especially Indigenous Laws, Crown-Aboriginal relations, Treaties and Aboriginal Rights. The study also elaborates on the history and legacy of residential schools and the colonial foundations of the legal system. Land-based learning is a central experiential learning element of the course to ground the learning on Indigenous Laws. The 2L students will participate in a profound learning experience by visiting the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, as well as a trip to the Wells Grey provincial park.



This year, TRU will be hosting the national Indigenous moot known as the Kawaskimhon Moot. The Kawaskimhon Moot encourages students to tackle a topic through an Indigenous perspective, getting their hands deep into a real-world issue of national importance. For example, last year's moot was held at the University of Victoria, where teams focused on the Coast GasLink Pipeline. Both Tara-Lynn Wilson and Bailie Copeland were one of the two teams that were chosen to participate in this moot.

UBC's Peter A. Allard School ILSA Update

By UBC ILSA

The Indigenous Law Students' Association at UBC's Peter A. Allard School of Law is an organization created by and for Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies of the law school. ILSA's primary goal at Allard is to help Indigenous and non-Indigenous students build relationships and foster community. This is made possible through cultural learning, public engagement, advocacy, and mentorship. ILSA hosts various events throughout the year that are intended to provide education on current and ongoing Indigenous initiatives. In partnerships with other Indigenous-led organizations, ILSA has been able to facilitate networking opportunities that are culturally appropriate and emphasize the importance of providing a safe space to Indigenous students while also building relationships. Through these initiatives, ILSA has proudly maintained community connections within the legal profession that provide a platform for job-sharing, educational seminars, and social events.



Indigenous Law Students' Association

Each academic year, ILSA hosts a Sisters in Spirit Vigil in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. ILSA organizes several events during Indigenous Awareness Week to highlight Indigenous histories and cultures and to celebrate Indigenous contributions to the legal profession, including cultural workshops, Indigenous Jeopardy Night, an Indigenous speaker series, and a keynote address. This year, the ILSA Gala takes place during Indigenous Awareness Week and hosts over 150 Indigenous law students, Allard alumni, and community members, as a commemoration of Indigenous law students and alumni. ILSA fundraises throughout the year for the Indigenous law student bursary that provides financial support for Indigenous law students. ILSA's overarching goal this year is to raise enough money to endow the Indigenous student bursary to provide permanent financial support for Indigenous students.

Lastly, an important aspect of ILSA is contributing to the community through initiatives such as Christmas hamper donations and volunteering at community events.

Level Justice

Indigenous Youth Outreach Program: Building Indigenous Youths Confidence to Understand and Pursue Justice Careers Through Mentorship, Education & Relationship Building

By Desneige Frandsen, Program Manager

The Indigenous Youth Outreach Program is an Indigenous youth justice education and mentorship program that engages First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth in a fun and collaborative way. The program provides information and offers Indigenous youth the opportunity to engage in activities that empower them to reach their full potential, build confidence, critical thinking and leadership skills, and promotes relationship-building between the youth and legal professional volunteers and facilitators. The IYOP celebrates Indigenous culture and traditions throughout the lessons and activities embedded in the program. Through this, the IYOP also advances reconciliation by offering youth and legal professionals the chance to learn and grow together throughout the program.



At LEVEL, we recognize that the accessibility of the justice system for Indigenous peoples in Canada is of significant concern. Indigenous youth are one of the fastest-growing populations in Canada; however, they experience poverty at a rate that is 4x that of non-Indigenous youth and are less likely to complete high school. For example, in Saskatchewan, 88% of non-Indigenous peoples have a high school education while only 44% of Indigenous peoples do. Beyond this, studies have shown that Indigenous youth are nationally over-represented at every stage of the criminal justice process yet underrepresented in the administration of justice.

Indigenous youth account for only 8% of the youth population; however, they accounted for 50% of youth admissions to Canadian correctional institutions in 2020/2021. If we look at this from a gendered lens we find that Indigenous male youth accounted for 48% of youth admissions to custody and female Indigenous youth represented 62% of youth female custody admissions. Another underlying issue with the Canadian correctional system is that Indigenous youth do not see themselves represented positively as legal professionals throughout the Canadian correctional system process. The representation of Indigenous peoples in the legal profession is extremely low. Although finding national statistics on this topic is quite difficult, the Law Society of British Columbia recently reported that only 2.7% of legal professionals in the province identify as Indigenous.

The reasons for the inaccessibility of the justice system for Indigenous peoples and communities are complex. The lack of culturally appropriate educational programming and support, coupled with the effects of racism, colonialism and the devaluation of Indigenous cultures and identities, are widely recognized as significant barriers to true, meaningful justice for Indigenous peoples who come into contact with the Canadian correctional system. Nationally, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have put into writing some goals for reconciliation that directly relate to the goals set out by LEVEL's IYOP.



BC Court of Appeal Justice Lenoard Marchand volunteering as Judge for the Youth Outreach Program Mock Court

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The TRC Final Report at Call #38 calls upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to commit to eliminating the over-representation of Aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade. LEVEL, through the IYOP, attempts to combat this issue by giving youth tools to understand corrections in Canada while also giving them an opportunity to see themselves as legal professionals or positive change-makers in the system. Beyond this focus on youth, the IYOP also provides lawyers and law students opportunities to engage in cultural competency initiatives which align with Calls #27 and #28 of the TRC Final Report. Aligning with several reconciliation measures put forward by the TRC Final Report, UNDRIP received Royal Assent and came into force on June 21, 2021. UNDRIP Article 15 purports a need for educational materials to incorporate Indigenous cultures, traditions and histories, and at Article 21 calls for improvement to the circumstances of Indigenous youth in areas of economic and social conditions, including areas of education, employment, vocational training and social security; IYOP promotes all of these areas.



BC Court of Appeal Justice Lenoard Marchand volunteering as Judge for the Youth Outreach Program Mock Court

IYOP responds to the areas of over-representation, education, cultural awareness, and humility and beyond by offering programming that not only increases youths' knowledge about the justice systems and their critical thinking and leadership skills but also enhances volunteers' and facilitators' comprehension of these topics as well. The IYOP has been celebrated for advancing reconciliation through reducing alienation between the justice sector and Indigenous communities by many community leaders including Senator Murray Sinclair.

In the long term the program's goals are to combat the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the justice system and increase the amount of youth who go on to pursue careers in the legal profession. We will reach this goal with the help of our passionate and driving team, through showing Indigenous youth a more inclusive, diverse and empathetic legal profession which incorporates Indigenous culture and tradition.

The program is currently looking for volunteers in for upcoming sessions. To get involved with the program, contact Desneige Frandsen at desneige@leveljustice.org or 705-817-7585.

British Columbia programs include:

Vancouver:

- Xpey' Elementary School
- Britannia Elementary School (Two Programs)

Quatsino:

- K'ak'ot'lats'i School

Victoria:

- Location to Be Announced for Deliveries Beginning in February, In Talks with:
 - Mount Douglas Secondary
 - Esquimalt High School
 - ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School
 - Oak Bay High School

***R v Powley* and the Rise of “Métis Denialism”**

By Stephen Mussell

On September 19, 2023, provincial Métis representative organizations and Métis across Canada proudly celebrated the 20th anniversary of *R v Powley* (*Powley*), the Supreme Court of Canada’s seminal decision on Métis constitutional rights. Meanwhile Ontario First Nations and their supporters [gathered on the steps of Parliament](#) in opposition to Bill C-53 which would, among other things, see the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and other provincial Métis representative organizations recognized as self-determining, self-governing Métis governments and Indigenous governing bodies.

Central to this ongoing opposition is the [government of Ontario’s recognition](#), in collaboration with the MNO, of six ostensible *Powley* rights-bearing historic Métis communities. In response, the MNO has [gone on the offensive](#), decrying the “attacks” leveled against MNO and “Ontario Métis” as “Métis denialism” and accusing those who oppose their actions of “lateral violence”.

In the 20 years since it was decided, *Powley* has paradoxically played an outsized role in the progressive deterioration of the Métis Nation. Relations between the Métis Nation and First Nations are at an all-time low; our understanding of our own rights, laws, and systems of governance is almost exclusively viewed through a colonial (*Powley*) legal lens; non-Métis and even non-Indigenous interlopers have been emboldened by *Powley* to make their own claims to being Métis and holding rights as a Métis people; and the Métis Nation (at least politically), has never been more divided.

While provincial Métis representative organizations have leveraged *Powley* to great effect, bringing themselves unprecedented growth, financial benefits, and Crown recognition, the myopic, *Powley*-centered, and inherently colonial approach employed to achieve these ends has ensured that future generations of Métis will be burdened with the task of undoing this apparent progress.

From the moment it was decided, enterprising leadership of the various provincial Métis representative organizations and their legal and political advisors put *Powley* to work. Consultation and accommodation guidelines were drafted, broad harvesting laws and policies were put in place, our contemporary presence within and without the Métis Homelands took on a different perceived meaning and character, research into the identification of historic Métis communities ramped up (particularly in British Columbia and Ontario), and the prioritization of our political and legal relations rapidly shifted from those with our First Nations relatives to one laser-focused on the Crown. For a people who were historically ignored by the Crown, the recognition *Powley* afforded us proved intoxicating and all-consuming.

In stark contrast, Métis history within the Métis Homelands is one of alliances, trade arrangements, treaties, and intermarriage with our First Nations relatives. Over hundreds of years and through these various legal, political, and social means our Métis ancestors legitimized and solidified our rights and our presence on the prairies and within our Homelands. *Powley* doesn’t take any of this into account. Rather, it enables a Métis right to be established absent any consideration of the legal, political, and social context which always informed the existence (or non-existence), and valid exercise of that right. In this way, and in my opinion, the *Powley* decision is inconsistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as it has resulted in Indigenous law and jurisdiction being wholly ignored and undermined in favor of a legal test established by colonial courts a mere 20 years ago.

So-called Métis denialism by First Nations is largely a calculated and counterfactual political myth. It is true that certain First Nations individuals may deny that Métis and our rights exist. However, as First Nations leadership in British Columbia and Ontario have frequently and clearly repeated, they do not deny the existence of us or our rights.



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What they do deny, and openly oppose, is an approach to the recognition of Métis rights that is motivated by self-interest, relies exclusively on *Powley*, is Crown-centric, violates their inherent rights, and ignores and undermines the historical legal, political, and social relationships that have mediated co-existence between Métis and First Nations since the Métis Nation first emerged.

If we are genuine and non-rhetorical in our efforts to decolonize and revitalize our laws, systems of governance, and relations with our First Nations relatives, this call for a shift of focus is one we should welcome and actively facilitate. Meeting First Nations' justified demands for accountability with hostility, resistance, and accusations of racism and lateral violence does nothing but harm our Nation now and into the future. As a people and a Nation, we are at a crossroads. It is far past time that our obsessive veneration of and reliance on *Powley* come to an end.



Chief Wilfred King addresses the rally against Bill C-53 on Parliament Hill in Ottawa Sept. 20, 2023

Stephen Mussell is an Indigenous rights lawyer, citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation, and was, until recently moving to Treaty 4 and the Métis Homeland, a member of the Métis Nation British Columbia. Among others, his mother Constance Mussell's (née Waldo) family is descended from the Brown, Whitford, Price, Spence, and Cook families and his father Michael Mussell's family is descended from the Klyne, LaFrance, Cyr, and Nolin families.

Assistant Professor Andrea Hilland on the foundational role of education in reconciliation

By Peter A. Allard School of Law

In September 2023, Andrea Hilland, KC was featured in a Peter A. Allard School of Law interview. Below is an excerpt and the full interview can be accessed [here on Allard's website](#).

"Assistant Professor Andrea Hilland on the foundational role of education in reconciliation"

Andrea Hilland, KC is a Nuxalk scholar and powerful advocate for the resurgence of Indigenous laws and genuine reconciliation. On July 1, 2023, we were delighted to welcome her back to the Peter A. Allard School of Law as an assistant professor.

Professor Hilland brings a wealth of legal expertise to the law school. She's advocated on behalf of First Nations to assert Aboriginal rights on environmental issues and advised organizations including the Law Society of BC, the Federation of Law Societies, the Canadian Bar Association of BC, the BC Human Rights Tribunal and the Continuing Legal Education Society of BC on Indigenous matters, including developing responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. An Allard Law alum, Professor Hilland also served as associate director of Indigenous Legal Studies from 2008-2012.



Randy's Reflections

By Randy Robinson

Reflections as Chair: A project of listening. I offer this reflection by way of sharing my experiences as the Past Chair of the Aboriginal Lawyers Forum. First, as Past Chair I acknowledge how fortunate I have been to work with a team of highly dedicated Indigenous lawyers. Like many Indigenous lawyers, my early years were driven by a strong resolve to counter the injustices born by the imposition of colonization on Indigenous Peoples and acknowledged in the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action. It was during my work as Crown Counsel in Northern BC that I had the opportunity to be invited to a restorative justice First Nations Court. It happened to be a period when the ALF representative, Tina Dion K.C. (now the Honourable Judge Dion), and Isabel Jackson (Department of Justice Counsel) made my acquaintance which later led me to join their team. A team whom together we brought forth significant shifts toward the retention, enhancement, stature, and influence of Aboriginal People in the legal profession.



Although our work encompassed a wide network of collaborative projects, I would like to highlight three areas that brought about both novel and positive change for Indigenous lawyers. Namely, this comprised of the Warrior Project, an Indigenous to Canada student scholarship; a campaign supporting Indigenous Bencher candidates in the recent historic Bencher election; and consulting the Law Society of BC regarding its Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory Matters Task Force. These projects were an extension of an enduring purpose in my own work thereby solidifying my goal to be a part of creating better spaces for Indigenous lawyers through reconciliatory initiatives.

The Warrior Project is an Indigenous to Canada student scholarship aligned with the principles set out in the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, specifically as it relates to self-determination in domestic justice systems. The newly established articling scholarship program offered through partnership with the Everyone Legal Clinic was successful in financially supporting several Indigenous to Canada articling students. This created an equitable pathway to combat the unique barriers that Indigenous law students face stemming from historic and systemic experiences with colonization. This scholarship ensured Indigenous articling students could embark on a culturally synergistic pathway with tangible benefits to Indigenous communities. This project revealed to me just how networking between Indigenous lawyers can lead to a critical nexus for effecting more self-determined responses to gaps in equity for Indigenous communities.

Supporting Indigenous Benchers in the recent historic Bencher election initiative was developed in response to the under-representation of Indigenous lawyers at the Bencher table. This project was successful in contributing to the unprecedented election of five Indigenous Benchers. Benchers are key decision makers that shape the legal profession and how it is regulated; thereby, Indigenous Benchers with lived experiences fulfill the vital role in the equitable regulation of lawyers.

Having acquired critical understandings about Indigenous engagement and regulation of the profession during the supportive campaign it followed that, when invited to consult on these issues by the Law Society, I accepted the task. The 2021 Bronstein regulatory decision highlighted the vulnerability of Indigenous peoples in the Law Society's complaints process. Consulting the Law Society on the Regulatory Task Force, which essentially aimed to make it easier for Indigenous Peoples to hold lawyers and the profession accountable, meant I worked diligently to provide the project with both lived experience and my knowledge of working with Indigenous Communities and Peoples encountering the justice system. The input I provided ensured an Indigenous perspective was included for the rethinking of how cultural competency informs the regulatory process of lawyers and protection and safety of the public. This project enhanced my understandings of an inherently provocative platform that critically needs Indigenous engagement.

In addition to the three areas highlighted aligned with my goal of making the profession safer and more inclusive, I co-chaired a joint Section meeting facilitating discussions about 2SLGBTQI+ issues such as the Essential Law and Practice Points for Serving Two Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQI+ clients. This was a successful deliberation on important topics such as inclusive language in courts and legal processes.

Whether it be the Warrior Project, the bencher election campaign, the consultation on Law Society regulation, or awareness on 2SLGBTQI+ issues, I learned that acquiring an acute listening stance served to enhance my ability to affect positive change and to create spaces for reconciliation that support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous lawyers in their' reconciliation journeys.

Native Courtworkers Celebrate 50 Years

By Christina J. Cook

2023 marks the 50th Year of the Native Courtworkers and Counselling Association of BC. It's an amazing legacy of 50 years of working to help Indigenous people navigate the legal system. The logo of the NCCABC includes a hand and their motto is to provide "A Helping Hand to Justice." Their work is vital to the operation of our legal system and vital for our Indigenous communities.

Hugh Braker, K.C., President of the Board of Directors for the NCCABC spoke to a packed gala on September 8, 2023, to celebrate this 50-year achievement. Braker shared remarks and well wishes sent to the NCCABC from the Premier and he spoke about the importance that Native Courtworkers play to the lives of Indigenous people across BC. Braker also shared a story about how a year ago, when the Province was considering reducing the funding for Native Courtworkers, it was the BC Provincial Court Judges that wrote to the Province to implore them to reconsider, saying many court rooms could not function without the efforts and assistance of Native Courtworkers. Thankfully, the Province continued to fund this important program and the NCCABC has continued.



NCCABC President, Hugh Braker, K.C.

The NCCABC has fascinating history. It was in 1970 that the seeds of the NCCABC were planted with the meeting of representatives from the Vancouver Indian Friendship Centre, Indian Homemaker's Association, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, BC Association of Non-Status Indians, North American Indian Brotherhood, and the John Howard Society. It was these organizations that saw the need for Indigenous community members to have Indigenous assistance in the court room and all throughout the legal process. From the meeting lead to the creation of the Native Courtworker program, on July 26, 1973 the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia was officially incorporated.

The NCCABC program grew and evolved to meet the needs of the Indigenous community. In 1973 the NCCABC started the Vancouver Alcohol and Drug Program and in 1977 they started the Prison Liaison Worker Program to assist Indigenous inmates in the transition to community. In 1990, the NCCABC hosted a Provincial Native Child Welfare Symposium in Vancouver. The objective was for First Nations to take control of our children's welfare. In 1995, NCCABC and the Justice Institute of BC created the Aboriginal Sex Offender Retraiter Program. In 1999, the NCCABC developed the first "A Safer Place" booklet on Violence Against Women. In 2001, the NCCABC undertook the Native Courtworker Youth Court Program at the Robson Street Courthouse. In 2004, the NCCABC established a new Aboriginal Detox Support Program in Vancouver to assist clients in carrying out their aftercare recovery plans. In 2013, the NCCABC developed the Social Justice Policy Platform and Strategic plan which included a commitment to create a BC Aboriginal Justice Council. In 2018, the NCCABC worked on the Indigenous Incarcerated Parents to Reintegration Initiative, which provided a culturally appropriate and effective avenue to support Indigenous parents who were incarcerated in Federal correctional institutions in British Columbia as they prepared for reintegration. From 2020 to the present, the NCCABC has navigated COVID related challenges with court services, worked on the issue of human trafficking and ending violence against women initiatives.



Lt to Rt: Terry La Liberte, KC – NCCABC Director, Kory Wilson – BCFNJC Chair, Maxwell Johnson – Recipient of the NCCABC Justice Award, Mary Brown – NCCABC Director, the Honourable Melanie Mark, Darryl Shackelly – NCCABC Executive Director

These are just some of the highlights of the 50 years of the amazing work of the NCCABC.

As the NCCABC continues into its next 50 years of work, the Indigenous and the legal communities owe the NCCABC and the Native Courtworkers a debt of gratitude for their efforts; and our justice system, though far from ideal is better for the efforts of the NCCABC.

Congratulations on the Opening of the Lillooet Indigenous Court!

By Christina J. Cook

On September 15, 2023, the Lillooet Indigenous Court opened after four years of development. Lillooet Indigenous Court is the ninth criminal sentencing Indigenous Court in British Columbia. The Provincial Court of BC's eight other Indigenous Courts (Criminal) are:

- New Westminster First Nations Court (opened November 2006)
- North Vancouver Chet wa nexwníw ta S7ekw'í7tel Indigenous Court (opened February 2012, serves Whistler, Squamish and the North Shore)
- Kamloops Cknucwentn First Nations Sentencing Court (opened March 2013)
- Duncan First Nations Court (opened May 2013)
- Nicola Valley Indigenous Court (opened in Merritt, October 2017)
- Prince George Indigenous Court (opened April 2018)
- Williams Lake Indigenous Court (opened December 2020)
- Hazelton Indigenous Court (opened August 2021)

It was a dedicated group of people from of the St'at'imc and Nlaka'pamux Nations as well as lawyers and the BC Provincial Court that worked on this initiative for over the last four years.

Pictured above, at the September 15, 2023 opening of the Lillooet Indigenous Court is Judge Raymond Phillips, member of Lytton First Nation – Nlaka'pamux. Judge Phillips was appointed to the BC Provincial Court in 2018. Prior to his appointment, he served as duty counsel for the Chnúcwentn First Nations Court in Kamloops and the Nicola Valley Indigenous Court in Merritt. Judge Phillips was actually the first duty counsel in the Cknucwentn First Nations court in 2013.



Photo Credit: Graham Kay, Barrister & Solicitor, Kamloops



Judge Phillips' swearing in ceremony in 2018

UVIC ILSA Update

By Chelsea Cameron

Aanii! Hello! My name is Chelsea Cameron and I am pleased to support the ALF Executive as the representative for the University of Victoria's (UVic) Indigenous Law Students Association (ILSA). At UVic, we are honoured to acknowledge the Lekwungen and SENĆOTEN-speaking peoples of the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ Nations on whose territories the university resides. Together, ILSA members organize social events, arrange guest speakers and support each other. I encourage all Indigenous JD and JD/JID students to connect with our ILSA Co-Chairs, Kylie Jack and Ashley Roussel, at ilsa1@uvic.ca, to have your name added to our distribution list or share ideas you may have for the upcoming year. All my relations.

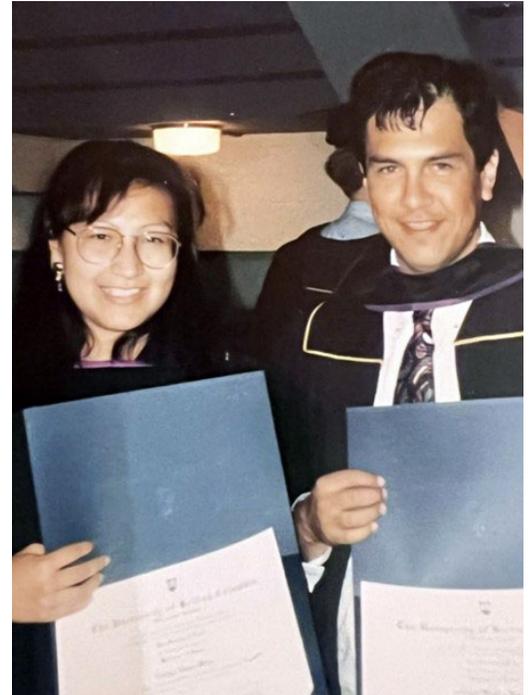


Remembering When: Indigenous Law Students of the Past

By Christina J. Cook



Graduating in 1995 Indigenous Law Students Elizabeth Hunt, Ardith Walkem, Terri-Lyn Williams-Davidson, Cynthia Callison, and Darwin Hanna



1995 UBC Law Graduates: Cherlyn Billy and Trevor Bernard



Pictured here the FIRST Indigenous Law Student Clinicians at the Indigenous Legal Community Clinic in 1994: Shannon Cummings, Cynthia Callison and Darwin Hanna



Jake Archie, Debra Febril, Miranda Seymour, et al, part of the FIRST Indigenous Law student cohort at TRU Law in 2011 (photo take in 2013)

Do you have any pictures from law school or practice to share? We would love to add them to the ALF Holiday Banquet Slide Show - please submit your photos to cjcooklawyer@gmail.com

ALF's 16th Annual National Indigenous Peoples Day Online Auction

By Isabel Jackson

This unique fundraising event brings the BC legal community together and has had great success over the years. To date the Auction has raised approximately \$150,000 to support Indigenous law and articling students

In 2023, the auction was the 16th Annual Online Auction and was held in June 2023.

For the first 7 years we raised almost \$50,000 toward the CBABC's Aboriginal Law Student Scholarship Trust which granted scholarships each year to Aboriginal law students. Once the Trust became sustainably funded the Auction continued to raise funds toward the ALF's mandate to support Aboriginal law students, graduates and practitioners in order to enhance the stature and influence of Aboriginal people in the legal profession.

The success of our Auction soared during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. That year the auction set a record for the most money raised. That record has since been broken each year. This year our 2023 Auction set a record for the 4th year running!

The Warrior Project

Owing to the success of our annual auction we launched **The Warrior Project** in 2022. The ALF is proud to continue our strong support of Indigenous law and articling students – our future Legal Warriors – through the launch of this very special initiative.

The Warrior Project funds articling positions for Indigenous students in BC. For our inaugural year in 2022 the ALF donated \$20,000 to create the "CBABC Aboriginal Lawyers Forum Scholarship" through the [Everyone Legal Clinic](#) run by Access Pro Bono.

The ELC aims to increase access to justice for low and modest income people by having articling students provide affordable, high quality legal services to underserved communities across BC. These values align with the ALF's dedication to Indigenous people and the legal profession.

The Warrior Project funded scholarships for four of the ELC's first-year Indigenous students, all of whom are paying it forward by providing legal aid and low-cost legal services in underserved communities including their own.

Lincoln Hallgren is a Warrior Project beneficiary who was born and raised in Burns Lake and who returned to his community of Lake Babine Nation to article with the Clinic. Lincoln had this to say about his Clinic experience, and the support he received from ALF: "Working at the Clinic showed me the immense gratitude people feel when they are genuinely heard and cared for, not just as paying clients, but as fellow human beings. I eagerly anticipate a brighter future, thanks to the support of ALF, my time in law school, and the invaluable guidance of the Clinic's supervising lawyers." From BarTalk: [A New Generation of Equal Justice Warriors](#)

The auction runs each year during the week of June 21 - National Indigenous Peoples Day. If you would like to support our 17th Annual Online Auction 2024 in any way please contact isabel.jackson@justice.gc.ca.

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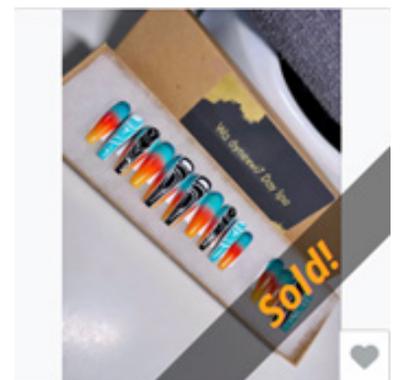
Beaded Poppy Brooch

Created by Catherine Askew, Moose Cree Fir...



Child's Orange T-Shirt Moccasins

by 13-year-old Izzy, Gibsan



Nail Art featuring Coast Salish Artwork

By Revive 'Wa áynexwí7' Day Spa

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Suggested auction item donations are indicated below. If you can't wait (!) you can always donate directly to the ALF Scholarship [here](#). Please be sure to select the ALF Scholarship from the drop-down menu. Donations of \$25 or more are eligible for a tax receipt.

Suggested Auction Item Donations

Are you an artisan or crafter? Many auction items are original works, Indigenous and non-Indigenous -- books, photography, paintings, limited edition prints and jewellery. These original works contribute to both the success and distinctiveness of our auction. Please consider donating your original work to this year's event. It will be a great opportunity to profile your talent while supporting a worthy cause.

Not an artisan or crafter? Consider donating any item that will attract a bid including select pre-owned items that remain suitable for recycling/re-gifting. Be creative when considering what you can donate to be auctioned off.

Tickets, passes, gift cards/certificates, etc. are other popular items. Consider soliciting a donation from your favourite restaurant, spa or other business that you patronize. Promotional opportunities are provided on the auction website.

Mentor Lunches. Experienced lawyers will take their winning bidder out for lunch for a time of sustenance in the form of food for the body as well as the mind and hopefully for the soul too! This is a unique opportunity for both mentors and protégés. Consider auctioning yourself off as a mentor or encouraging someone else to do so.



ABORIGINAL LAWYERS FORUM ANNUAL HOLIDAY BANQUET

Friday, November 24, 2023 | 5:30pm - 10:00pm
Fairmont Waterfront (Waterfront Ballroom)
900 Canada Place, Vancouver, BC

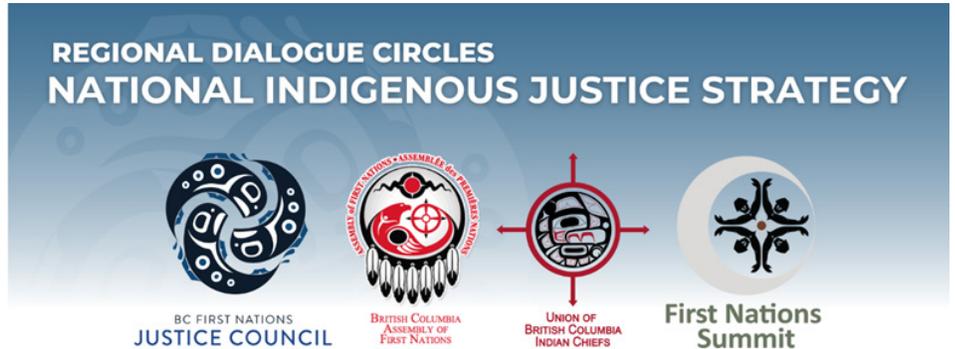
Register: cbabc.org/ALFBanquet

The ALF acknowledges that this event will take place on the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish - Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh - Peoples.

National Indigenous Justice Strategy – HAVE YOUR SAY!

By Christina J. Cook

Canada is currently undertaking the development of a National Indigenous Justice Strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to develop a culturally appropriate strategy informed by the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples that includes recommendations for action to address systemic discrimination and the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian justice system. It is anticipated the NJIS will include legislative, policy and program measures. These measures should “advance self-determination” and be responsive to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



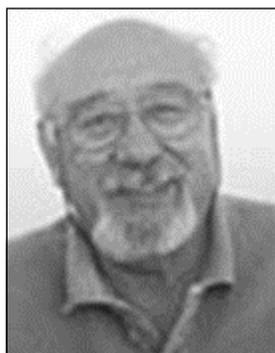
Canada is undertaking engagement sessions with Indigenous communities and groups across Canada. In addition to Canada’s engagement sessions, 38 different Indigenous organizations are undertaking engagement with their respective communities as well.

The BC First Nations Justice Council in partnership with the First Nations Leadership Council (comprised of BCAFN, UBCIC, and the FN Summit) has been conducting engagements in BC both in person and virtual (see a full listing of 2023 engagement dates [here](#).)

If you cannot make any of the engagement sessions, you can still have your say by filling out a survey found [here](#):

The large-scale national justice reform that is being contemplated with this National Indigenous Justice Strategy does not occur often. Dare I say this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for substantive legislative and policy reform. Indigenous voices – YOUR VOICE needs to be included in this discussion. Please ensure you share your ideas, experiences and opinions on how the Canadian Criminal Justice System could be revolutionized to meet the needs of Indigenous people.

For more information, please email nijs@bcfnjc.com



Did you know?

George Asp was the first Tahltan Lawyer! Asp attended the inaugural session of session of the Summer Program of Legal Studies for Native People at the University of Saskatchewan in 1973, prior to which time there were only four lawyers and five law students of Native ancestry in all of Canada. He graduated law school in 1976 and was Called to the Bars in B.C. and the Yukon in 1977!